



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON CENTER FOR
DEAF and HARD of HEARING YOUTH
611 Grand Blvd., S-26 Vancouver, Washington 98661-4918 • (360) 696-6525
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July 27, 2020

Dear WSD Families,

We have some important news to share regarding WSD operations for this fall. Last week, Executive Director Rick Hauan and Superintendent Shauna Bilyeu as well leaders from WSSB met with the Washington Department of Health (DOH) and a representative from Governor Inslee's office to discuss the possibility of re-opening in person this fall (August 31, 2020).

In order to keep staff, students and families safe and based on the guidance from the Department of Health (DOH), we will open fall of 2020 in a **remote learning environment** at least through October 31, 2020. During the month of October, we will re-evaluate our ability to operate in-person safely after October 31. At that time working with DOH, we will make the decision about extending the remote learning environment.

Department of Health, CDHY/WSD and WSSB discussed our concerns with the recent uptick in COVID community spread across the state and specifically here in Clark County, as well as our complex state-wide transportation operations, cottages, and cross-over between local students and staff with residential students both in cottages and in classes. This decision is very difficult. We really want to have our students come back to school. We also recognize our responsibility to keep our staff and students safe and healthy. It is that deep concern for staff and student safety that is at the center of this very difficult decision.

Washington School for the Deaf (WSD) - "BEST"
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Representatives from DOH and the Governor's office were very receptive and understanding to our significant concern about the lack of in-person instruction.

We now have many other operational decisions that must be made based on the decision to open in a remote learning environment. We are working together to develop a more comprehensive plan, taking into consideration many factors, but this task will require much planning. We ask for your continued patience while we finalize the full plan. **We hope to have more information to you with the details of our plan by the week of August 17th.**

Teachers, administrators and other staff will be planning for a safe and positive start to the school year with increased attention on how to deliver instruction through technology. Our residential department is working on plans to create "virtual" cottages that are open to all WSD students (local as well as residential). We are excited to welcome back students and families to WSD, albeit in a different way.

We hope you are staying safe and well in these trying times. Please reach out to us with any questions.

Respectfully,

Rick Hauan
Executive Director

Shauna Bilyeu
Superintendent

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